

Egyptian and French leaders meet

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand, spending his Christmas holiday in Egypt for the second year in a row, had an hour of informal talks on Wednesday with President Hosni Mubarak. Officials said the meeting was a follow-up to Mr. Mubarak's visit to Paris two weeks ago, when he received a pledge of French support for Egypt's request for a loan of \$1 billion from the International Monetary Fund. They gave no details. Mr. Mitterrand's holiday itinerary this year is not yet known, but he spent his Christmas visiting Pharaonic monuments in the southern cities of Luxor and Aswan. French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Reimond is also in Egypt for Christmas. He went to Luxor on Wednesday after two days of talks with Mr. Mubarak and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Esmat Abdul Meguid.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Arab Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية العربية الراية

Greek-Turkish row continues

ATHENS (AP) — Premier Andreas Papandreu said Wednesday that Greece and Turkey were involved in "intense confrontation" following last week's border clash in which two Turkish and one Greek soldier were killed. Mr. Papandreu also said during a meeting with newly promoted armed forces commanders that Greece would not resume talks with Turkey until Turkish troops pulled out of the divided Mediterranean island of Cyprus. "There's no doubt that we're going through a period of intense confrontation with Turkey... and there has been continuous and unacceptable harassment," the premier said. On the other hand, Turkey said evidence pointed to a Greek intrusion onto Turkish soil as the cause of the border clash. A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement said a meeting on Tuesday between officials of the two countries, allies in the NATO alliance, failed to reach agreement. "Yesterday's on-site inquiry has made it amply clear that the incident was started by a Greek border intrusion and that the responsibility fully lies with the Greek side," it said.

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Road accidents kill 3, hurt 109 in 1 week

AMMAN (Petra) — Three people died and 109 others were injured in 232 road accidents which occurred in Jordan over the past week, according to a statistical bulletin issued by the Public Security Department (PSD). The bulletin said that 113 of the accidents occurred in the Amman region. The rest occurred in Irbid (47), Balqa (21), Zarqa (14), Mafraq (12), Badia (9), Karak (seven), Maan (five), Aqaba (five), and Tafleh (three).

Shubellat explains House argument

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Laith Shubellat said Wednesday that he stood by a statement he made to the Lower House's session on Tuesday, in which he said that Parliament was the right forum for discussing ministers, provided that abusive language was not used in such criticism. In a letter he wrote to the Jordan Times on Wednesday, the Amman deputy explained his position on the verbal clash that he had with Minister of Labour and Deputy Khaleel Haj Hassan on the House's floor during Tuesday's session. The letter appears in full on page 4.

Rabin alleges PLO-Falange link

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin has charged that Israel's former Christian allies in Lebanon were allowing officers of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) into the country through a port near Beirut. Mr. Rabin said the PLO colonels and operatives are arriving at the port of Sidon and they are doing so with the blessing of the Falange (Lebanese Forces) in Lebanon. Mr. Rabin was quoted as telling Parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee by Israel Radio.

Nazer formally named oil minister

JEDDAH (R) — Hisham Nazer, named Saudi Arabia's acting oil minister when Ahmad Zaki Yamani was dismissed last October, has been formally appointed to the post, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported Wednesday. It said King Fahd issued a decree appointing Mr. Nazer as minister of petroleum and mineral resources and acting planning minister (See earlier story on page 7).

First 10 MXs fully operational

WASHINGTON (R) — The first 10 multi-warhead MX missiles have been placed in their silos at a Wyoming air base and put on combat alert, the U.S. Defence Department said Tuesday. A Pentagon spokesman said the weapons, the first new U.S. land-based missiles in 16 years, achieved "initial operational capability" at Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming on Monday night and were "ready for a national emergency." After years of argument in the administrations of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan and in Congress about secure methods of basing the MX, Congress authorised funds to build 50 to be put in reinforced silos.

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Iraq keeps up heavy air blitz on Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq said its warplanes bombed Iranian troops and industrial targets in 15 raids on Wednesday, the third day of sustained air attacks involving scores of aircraft.

Iraq's air force commander vowed his jets would continue to hit Iran's economic lifelines and added: "No Iranian will be safe from our burning fire, which is awaiting any aggressor."

Baghdad Radio, monitored in Nicosia, said the jets attacked troop concentrations and transport hubs in Sumar and Shushar in Western Iran, and Dezful farther south.

In other raids, Iraqi jets hit the oil refinery and power station in the western city of Kermanshah, also known as Bakhtaran, as well as a Hawk anti-aircraft missile battery.

Iraq says at least 275 people have been killed since Sunday in Iraqi air raids on Bakhtaran and the nearby city of Islamabad-e Gharb.

The air blitz came amid indications the Iranians may be preparing to launch their long-heralded "final offensive."

They reportedly have massed more than 650,000 troops along the war front.

Iraq said Iraqi jets bombed a cargo ship impounded by Iran.

Tehran's Islamic Republic News Agency, also monitored in Nicosia, said two Iranian coast guardsmen were seriously wounded in the attack on the Ibn Al Beitar, moored at an unspecified Iranian port.

The ship's bridge and engine room were heavily damaged and the 23,618-tonne freighter was "about to sink" because its hull was holed, the agency said.

The commander of Iraq's air force, Air Marshal Hamid Shaaban, said his jets had "the potential to hit any target anywhere in Iran and destroy it."

In an interview in this week's issue of the Iraqi weekly magazine Alif Baas, Marshal Shaaban denied that Iraqi warplanes landed in a Gulf Arab country to refuel after bombing Iran's Larak oil terminal last month.

Marshal Shaaban said Iraq would continue its air blitz on Iran's economy and would strike at any alternative outlets built by Iran to export its oil.

"No Iranian will be safe from our burning fire, which is awaiting any aggressor," he told the magazine.

The Iranian News Agency said Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, backed by Iranian Revolutionary Guards, killed 60 Iraqi troops who were trying to retake heights in Dohuk province earlier this week.

It said the heights are occupied by anti-government rebels backed by Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

Iranian warplanes bombed military and economic targets in northern Iraq on Wednesday, the agency said. It said the fighter-bombers "heavily pounded" targets in the town of Dinnah.

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Bethlehem marks 20th Christmas under shadow of occupation

BETHLEHEM, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Soldiers carrying automatic weapons patrolled the streets and conducted house-to-house searches as pilgrims celebrated Christmas eve with marching bands and bagpipes in the town of Jesus' birth.

As Bethlehem marked its 20th Christmas under Israeli occupation, Israeli security measures were tighter than usual after three weeks of Palestinian protests in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in which four Palestinians were killed.

"The soldiers have been searching houses since Sunday. I don't remember this ever happening at Christmas since I have been mayor," said Mayor Elias Freij, who was elected in 1972.

Mr. Freij told AP that for the first time ever, he was asked to show his identity card by a soldier at one of the dozens of checkpoints leading into Manger Square.

In the square opposite the ancient Church of the Nativity, a 40-foot tree twinkled with lights as Israeli soldiers kept watch from the rooftops. Sonic booms came from overhead as Israeli jetfighters swooped by. Army helicopters also circled the town.

Some 1,000 khaki-clad scouts wearing red berets marched in Manger Square, some beating drums and playing "Jingle Bells" on bagpipes.

Warm sunshine bathed Manger Square as the patriarchs donned scarlet vestments and strode between columns of priests into the church to celebrate afternoon mass. The procession was led by the Roman Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem, Giacomo Giuseppe Beltritti.

Fewer pilgrims appeared to be in the town this year and Israeli officials said many American tourists were staying away because of fears of guerrilla attack.

Celebrations of the birth of Jesus are highlighted by the Latin Christmas eve midnight mass in St. Catherine's Church adjacent to the Church of the Nativity.

Military roadblocks sealed off Bethlehem to private vehicles. Pilgrims were shuttled to the town from Jerusalem aboard special buses accompanied by armed guards.

Many of the submachinegun-toting soldiers guarding the holy places and patrolling the narrow cobblestone alleyways of the ancient Arab market were not yet born when Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967.

"I am surprised to see so many soldiers with guns when this is supposed to be such a holy place. It's really amazing to go outside the church and to see the sign which says 'no arms permitted in the church'," said Gillian Serran, a tourist from London.

Mr. Freij, a Greek Orthodox, told reporters that Bethlehem's eternal message was peace on earth, and called for greater efforts to achieve peace between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East.

"People in the Middle East are suffering," he said, calling for "a total truce for all kinds of violence." He also said Israel should freeze the development of Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank.

"I personally condemn and regret all acts of violence from any side against innocent people," he said. "I strongly endorse and support the principle of peaceful coexistence in the Holy Land between Arab and Jews and Arabs and Israelis."

"I take this opportunity from the little town of Bethlehem to

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Egyptian president meets Masri in Alexandria Jordan and Egypt in complete agreement on issues before OIC

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Jordanian Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri held talks in Alexandria on Wednesday and an Egyptian Foreign Ministry statement said following the talks that Egypt and Jordan were in complete agreement on issues to be discussed at next month's Islamic summit in Kuwait.

Mr. Masri told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in Cairo that President Mubarak praised the efforts being made by His Majesty King Hussein to settle Arab differences and unite Arab positions and efforts in the face of dangers facing the Arab Nation.

President Mubarak also expressed his pride in relations between the two countries. Petra said.

Mr. Masri said the meeting, which was attended by Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid and Jordanian Ambassador in Cairo Hussein Al Hamami, reviewed all issues of

concern to both countries and the latest development in the Arab arena.

Official talks began between Mr. Masri and Dr. Abdul Meguid in Cairo later Wednesday. Mr. Masri said after the first round of talks that the meeting was characterised by frankness, and that the two sides exchanged views on issues of concern to the two countries.

The close Jordanian-Egyptian relations were also reviewed during the talks.

Mr. Masri arrived here on Monday on a three-day visit.

Mr. Masri arrived from Tunis where he attended an Arab League foreign ministers meeting.

Mr. Masri said he came here within the framework of continued consultations between the two countries.

Mr. Masri told reporters he was to review developments in the Arab World with Dr. Abdul Meguid.

Mr. Masri declined to comment on reports that Syria would not

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receive an Arab League foreign ministers delegation when it goes to Damascus to try to arrange a ceasefire in Lebanon's "camps war" and lift the siege on Palestinian refugees.

"The committee of seven foreign ministers will hold consultations on the situation," Mr. Masri said.

At the foreign minister's meeting, Syrian delegate Halem Hunein denounced the creation of the committee as a propaganda exercise and indicated his country would not receive it.

Other members of the committee are Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Kuwait, Mauritania and North Yemen.

Mr. Masri said it was difficult to convene an Arab summit conference under the present circumstances.

Both Mr. Mubarak and King Hussein are expected to attend the Jan. 26 summit in Kuwait of the Organisation of Islamic

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receive an Arab League foreign ministers delegation when it goes to Damascus to try to arrange a ceasefire in Lebanon's "camps war" and lift the siege on Palestinian refugees.

"The committee of seven foreign ministers will hold consultations on

Chad says Libya renewing raids on Tibesti mountains

N'DJAMENA (R) — Libya launched an intensive bombing raid on former Chadian rebels in the northern town of Zouar Wednesday, official Chadian sources said.

The sources told Reuters the town was on fire after the raids, which began at dawn.

Chad has reported two other Libyan raids since the weekend on towns in the rugged Tibesti mountains, the stronghold of an estimated 3,000 troops loyal to former Chadian rebel and Libyan ally, Goukouni Oueddei, who now backs the government.

Libya denies having troops in Chad and there was no independent confirmation of the attacks from the isolated Tibesti area in the far north of the country.

On Sunday, Chad said Libya had lost over 400 men and 17 tanks and its troops were put to flight in the town of Bardai. The following day it accused Libya of using napalm and toxic gas in another attack on Zouar.

The United States announced last week that it was rushing up to \$15 million in military assistance to Chad's President Hissene Habre to help repel Libyan attacks.

Sources close to the U.S. embassy told Reuters that an American plane landed in N'Djamena on Monday with military supplies but declined to say whether further deliveries were imminent.

A C-5 Galaxy aircraft has delivered U.S. vehicles, small

Libya now backs another northern rebel leader, Achicheh Ibn Oumar.

The official press said two Libyan officers were among the 400 men killed at Bardai. Two of the bodies had been identified as Capt. Djamal Abdelaziz Abdul Salam and Capt. Dahli Mahamat Dahli, it reported.

The rapprochement between Mr. Habre and Mr. Goukouni, who used to be sworn enemies, is the latest twist in conflict which has raged intermittently for the last 20 years.

In Paris, the satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné said French paratroopers entered northern Chad last week to guide a parachute drop by two French transport planes of ammunition, fuel and food supplies to former rebels beleaguered by Libyan troops.

This would be the first time French troops had crossed north of the 16th parallel separating the government-held south from areas controlled by Libyans and their former rebel allies.

No official comment on the report was immediately available.

Le Canard Enchaîné said a group of about 20 paratroopers entered an area controlled by Mr. Goukouni's forces where the parachute drop was to take place, between Zouar and Bardai about 1,000 kilometres north of the capital, N'Djamena.

It said the French troops then distributed the arms to Mr. Goukouni's soldiers.

Europeans bid for Saudi sub deal

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Bidding for Saudi Arabia's proposed submarine fleet ended on Dec. 15 and included an offer from the Dutch Rotterdam Drydock Co., Western diplomatic sources said Wednesday.

The kingdom's interest in developing its fledgling naval force was underscored by King Fahd earlier this week.

Inaugurating a command and control centre at navy headquarters on the Gulf at Jubail, King Fahd declared his government would beef up the navy with a "deterrent force" of submarines.

Although several major Western European shipbuilders were reported ready to participate in the tenders, it was the Dutch offer by Rotterdam's Broerboek Maatschappij which drew protest from Israel because it involved a Dutch policy reversal against sale of arms to "regions of tension."

An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman last week expressed "profound regret" over the Dutch move, saying that The Netherlands should not strengthen the military capability of a country which declares itself in a state of war with Israel.

But the diplomatic sources, who spoke on condition they not be named, said it was the French participants who were considered the front-runners in the bids because the Saudi navy has so far been equipped mainly by France.

A decision on the deal, worth more than \$1 billion and involving six to eight diesel-electric submarines, was expected in the late spring or early summer, said the sources.

When the award is given, the life of the contract is expected to run into the next century as the submarines would take about a decade to build and the account would also entail training.

Earlier reports mentioned the French bidders as Direction des Constructions et Armes Navales and Thomson CSF.

These reports said the British Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering, West Germany's Nordseewerke and the state-run Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft, Sweden's Kockums and Italy's Fincantieri were taking part in the bids.

Israel concedes to Rome request in Vanunu case

TEL AVIV (R) — The director-general of Israel's Foreign Ministry Wednesday said his government would clarify for Italy claims by accused nuclear technician Mordchai Vanunu that he was abducted in Rome and spirited back to Israel.

Dr. Yossi Beilin said in an interview on state radio that the director-general of the Italian Foreign Ministry formally requested explanations from Israel's ambassador to Italy late Tuesday night.

"He requested clarifications on the subject of Vanunu and he will receive these clarifications," Beilin said.

The Italian request was passed on to the Israeli Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem which is now preparing a full explanation for Rome on Vanunu's claims, a ministry official who asked not to be identified told Reuters.

Asked if a crisis had developed in Israeli-Italian relations, Beilin replied: "In my estimation, there is no diplomatic clash."

Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi said Tuesday that Rome would insist on satisfactory responses from Israel over

Vanunu's allegations.

The 31-year-old Vanunu disappeared from London on Sept. 30 after telling the London-based Sunday Times that Israel had produced nuclear warheads for two decades at the top-secret Dimona nuclear plant where he worked for 10 years.

On Sunday he flashed a message on the palm of his hand against the window of a police van going to a closed Jerusalem district court hearing. It said: "Hijacked in Rome 11 30.9.86 2100 came to Rome BA Flight 504."

Military censors barred publication of Vanunu's message for 24 hours until after it was published in the foreign media. The first newspaper to publish its contents was the London Evening Standard. The chief censor said Wednesday that it filed a complaint with police against the newspaper.

Israeli newspapers assailed the censorship as excessive and an effort to cover up lapses of court security.

Five weeks after Vanunu vanished, Israel announced it was holding him in detention but

refused to divulge details of his abduction. It would only say he was not kidnapped from British soil and no British laws were broken.

Foreign news reports have said Vanunu was apparently lured from London by a blonde agent working for the Israeli secret service who told him her name was Cindy.

Privately, Israeli sources have said Italy was not particularly interested in pressing for details on Vanunu, who faces espionage and treason charges that carry maximum sentences of life imprisonment or death.

Vanunu would have to be found guilty of "helping an enemy in wartime" to face the death penalty, and jurists said the maximum punishment would apply only if Israel were actually involved in hostilities.

The Sunday Times said Vanunu's disclosures showed Israel was the world's sixth largest nuclear power. Israel has refused comment on Vanunu's allegations and will only say it will not be the first country to introduce atomic weapons into the Middle East.

The London Evening Standard

on Wednesday denied that its Israeli correspondent had violated Israeli censorship laws in the case of Mordchai Vanunu, the technician accused of divulging Israel's nuclear secrets.

Standard Editor John Lees said correspondent Bernard Josephs did not write the account the newspaper published on Monday of Vanunu's message signalled to journalists that he was kidnapped by Israeli agents from Rome.

"These details were not supplied by Mr. Josephs," Lees said in a statement. "They came to the Evening Standard from an entirely different source and our story was compiled in London."

Lees refused to give the source of the story which spelt out the details of Vanunu's message.

Israeli censors banned journalists from using the material, but lifted the restriction after the London paper broke the story.

Israeli authorities have ordered a police inquiry into whether Josephs broke the regulations and have said his press credentials are likely to be suspended during the investigation.

Pretoria reportedly supplied arms to Gulf belligerents

By Martin Sieff

WASHINGTON — For the past two years, South Africa has supplied an estimated \$2 billion worth of arms to both sides in the Gulf war, giving both Iran and Iraq the same sophisticated weapons in return for huge oil shipments.

In 1985, Iran agreed to buy \$750 million worth of South African weapons, including 155mm self-propelled G-5 Howitzers. The radar operated field artillery pieces have a range of 30 miles with chemical warfare applications.

News of the deal first surfaced in the Jan. 13, 1986, edition of the Paris-based Arabic-language magazine Al-Tahrik Al-Arabiyyah. The Iranian government, through its embassy in Oslo, Norway, bitterly denied the reports but oil industry sources said they were accurate.

Coinciding with Iran deal, South Africa negotiated an even bigger arms sale to Iraq. It involved, according to the Africa Confidential newsletter, 100 G-5 Howitzers worth \$525 million. That was followed by a \$1 billion Iraqi order for artillery

Syria seeks support for conference on terrorism

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria has sought international support for an international conference to define the meaning of terrorism and differentiate it from legitimate struggle, Damascus Radio reported.

The radio said an appeal for support was made on Tuesday by Foreign Minister Farouk Al-Sharaa in letters to foreign ministers of countries which have diplomatic relations with Syria.

It said these included Zimbabwe and India as current and past chairmen of the Non-Aligned Movement, the foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the Organisation of

African Unity, socialist countries, China, Japan, and all West European countries except Britain.

The letters sought support for proposals in Syria's message to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar "which called for an international effort to define the meaning of terrorism and to distinguish it from legitimate struggle."

Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad proposed an international conference to Mr. Perez de Cuellar following British charges that his country was involved in an attempt to blow up an Israeli airliner at Heathrow airport in April.

Libyan minister in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Libyan Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Al-Mansour arrived here Tuesday night at the head of a delegation for an official visit to Algeria.

The reason for his trip was not announced, but diplomats said it was part of a gradual rapprochement between the two North African states.

After a period of cool relations

Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid met with Col. Mouamar Qadhafi on their common frontier last January.

Diplomats said relations between the two had become closer since August when King Hassan of Morocco abrogated a state union treaty he had signed two years before, with Col. Qadhafi.

Iranian opposition reports protests against Gulf war

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — An exiled Iranian opposition group said Wednesday that more than 8,000 people demonstrated against the Iran-Iraq war in the north eastern city of Mashhad.

The group, the People's Mujahadeen, said the demonstrators shouting "Death to Khomeini" destroyed 10 vehicles belonging to the Revolutionary Guards during the protest earlier this month.

The Mujahadeen, which made the claim in a telex issued by its office in Paris, said the demonstration continued for three hours despite attempts by the guards to quell it with tear gas.

Najibullah to head new committee

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghan Communist Party leader Najibullah has been appointed to head a commission to draw up a new constitution, the official Radio Kabul reported. The radio, monitored in Islamabad, said he was chosen at a session of the Revolutionary Council, the country's top legislative body.

Reuters erroneously reported on Tuesday that Mr. Najibullah had been appointed president of the revolutionary council, a post carrying with it the role of head of state. The incorrect report was caused by a radio monitoring error.

TV & RADIO

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Special committee discusses agricultural development in occupied Arab territories

AMMAN (Petra) — A special technical committee, entrusted with supervising the development of the agricultural sector in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, met here Wednesday and passed a number of resolutions pertaining to their mission.

Dr. Sadallah Sadallah, who is member of the committee and head of the Ministry of Occupied Territories Affairs department of land development, said that the committee members discussed detailed strategies for developing the agricultural sector in the occupied Arab territories in line with guidelines set by a higher ministerial committee.

The members discussed the establishment of an agricultural extension service to help agricultural cooperatives in their activities, and to expand the work of cooperatives to include as many farmers as possible. Dr. Sadallah said that the committee

also discussed setting up an agricultural credit service to finance agricultural projects in the occupied Arab territories, and looked into prospects for supporting the work of research centres, and making preparations for the implementation of agricultural schemes within the projected five-year plan for the Israeli-held Arab lands.

The committee adopted a number of recommendations which will be submitted to the higher ministerial committee for approval, Dr. Sadallah added.

The technical committee comprises representatives of the Ministries of Occupied Territories Affairs and Agriculture, and also the Jordan Cooperative Organisation, the Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company of Jordan (AMPCO), and agricultural marketing societies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Farmers plant more potatoes, onions to meet larger demand

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture says that a great number of farmers in the Jordan Valley have now begun growing potatoes and onions which are in great demand on the local market.

A "winter" which will eventually reduce production of traditional crops that the country used to find difficulty in marketing due to their large size.

Mr. Mazen Khasawneh, director of the ministry's computer and economy section, said that more and more farmers have replaced tomatoes, marrows and eggplants with potatoes and onions, because the latter are more in demand in Jordan.

Nearly 30,000 tonnes of potatoes used to be produced in the Jordan Valley annually; this is only half of the amounts required for the country's consumption. This meant that Jordan had to import potatoes and onions from neighbouring countries to meet

the demand, Mr. Khasawneh added.

The Ministry of Agriculture has distributed 2,595 kilograms of potato seeds to the farmers of the Jordan Valley at nominal prices to encourage them to grow potatoes; a similar measure is being made for encouraging the production of onions, Mr. Khasawneh noted.

He called on farmers to follow the ministry's agricultural patterns system and grow crops in demand in the country.

Mr. Khasawneh said that a study shows that the cost of growing one dunum with onions is JD 120, while the production of that dunum will yield JD 230; one dunum of potato costs JD 166 to grow, but the produce will earn JD 350. He said that growing potatoes and onions proved to be lucrative for the farmers and so they have indulged in growing such profitable crops.

Dajani makes inspection tour of Irbid services

IRBID (Petra) — Minister of Interior Hajj Dajani Wednesday made an inspection visit to Irbid where he met with its governor, mayor, senior officials, and dignitaries to discuss public services and local issues.

At a meeting held in Irbid, Mr. Dajani announced that the Ministry of Interior is working out a special set of regulations for provincial governors and training courses for them to provide them with all and raise their efficiency.

Mr. Dajani said that provincial governors have to promote the work of their departments and develop skills with the public with

delivered a Christmas eve message of peace in Bethlehem.

"The government of Israel remains steadfast in its desire and striving for peace in our area," Mr. Shamir said at a reception hosted by Mayor Freil.

"Let us join together in the hope that the year ahead will indeed be for us and all mankind a year of peace," the right-wing Israeli leader said.

In another development, a left-wing Israeli legislator said Wednesday West Bank Jewish settlers serving in a reserve army unit were likely responsible for the killing of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy during an anti-Israeli demonstration two weeks ago.

Legislator Ran Cohen told AP he had written to Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin to say

NEWS IN BRIEF

Unification of health insurance studied

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Zaid Hamzeh chaired a meeting on Wednesday for heads and representatives of the private sector companies and corporations, during which they studied the unification of health insurance draft agreements. Dr. Hamzeh stressed the ministry's keenness on expanding its health services to benefit all citizens in the Kingdom. He also stressed the importance of unifying the health insurance agreements for private sector institutions to improve the standard of health services.

PSD delegation briefed on civil defence

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation of Public Security Department (PSD) senior officers paid a visit Wednesday to the Civil Defence Department (CDD), where they were briefed by the CDD Director Lieutenant-General Khaled Al Tarawneh on the department's stages of development and its tasks. Lt.-Gen. Tarawneh pointed out that the CDD plans to train the public in the various civil defence measures. He also explained the importance of the early warning system which the department has recently introduced. The delegation was accompanied by the PSD Assistant Directors Major General Mohammad Obeidat and Major General Ghazi Jarrar.

Survey reveals 355 charities in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A survey carried out by the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) in the East Bank of Jordan reveals that the number of charitable societies now stands at 355 in the country's eight governorates. The survey was aimed at assessing the type of work which voluntary and charitable societies carry out, and their role in promoting social and economic life in Jordan. The survey has come up with information and data which will be useful for planners, researchers and policy makers alike, a GUVS spokesman said.

Southern Sinai governor ends tour

AQABA (Petra) — The Governor of Southern Sinai Mohammad Nouriddin Afifi on Wednesday concluded a four-day visit to Aqaba during which he met with the Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Bassam Qaqish and senior officials in Aqaba, and discussed with them means of promoting tourism between South Sinai and South Aqaba. Mr. Afifi also visited a number of historical and tourist sites in the southern region of Jordan.

1001 candles light up Christmas

AMMAN (J.T.) — "A one thousand and one candle" were lit on the Christmas eve on Wednesday as Santa Claus greeted and presented gifts to children to the tune of the Madrigals musical group at the Amman Marriott Hotel. Cocktails and snacks were presented round a titanic Christmas tree, erected in the middle of the lounge, as the hotel Director General Mr. Halle Aguilar and wife entertained the guests.

Zarka Municipality appeals to citizens to pay dues to finance projects

ZARKA (Petra) — Zarka Municipality spent a total of JD 1.166 million in 1986 on building roads, public gardens, and improving public services.

However, the municipality requires more funds for its ambitious projects in the coming year. Mr. Badri Baha'eddin, chairman of the municipality committee, said Wednesday.

Speaking at a meeting of representatives of the Zarka chambers of commerce and various business sectors in the city, Mr. Baha'eddin said that the municipality can maintain good services if the local citizens participate in providing a better public service. All citizens in Zarka are called on to honour

their financial commitments and pay their dues so that the municipality can carry out its different projects, Mr. Baha'eddin said.

He said in the coming year the municipality plans to spend JD 1.5 million on improving roads, building a sports stadium, and a public library, installing traffic lights in a number of areas, purchasing land for public use, setting up a slaughter house and a health laboratory.

Acting governor of Zarka, Khaled Al Bawaziz, also spoke on services for Zarka in an interview with the Jordan News Agency Petra. He said that the past year witnessed the implementation of projects in social, health, education, agriculture, tourism, housing and other municipal fields.

Prince Mohammad awards chess Olympiad players

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad Wednesday attended a ceremony held by the Chess Fans Club at the University of Jordan. The ceremony was to honour members of the Jordanian Chess Federation who took part in the World Chess Olympiad recently held in the United Arab Emirates.

At the outset of the ceremony Prince Mohammad, who is president of the Jordanian Chess Federation, opened the club's new premises and later distributed awards to the national team of the chess games.

Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, the university's president, presented the university shield to Prince Mohammad during the ceremony which was attended by university officials.

Prince Mohammad later inspected the standing exhibition of traditional costumes at the university.

AMPCO, Canada discuss cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — The commercial attaché at the Canadian embassy Mr. Guili Rishchynski met Wednesday with Mr. Ghazi Abu Hassan director general of the Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (AMPCO) of Jordan to discuss the prospect of between the company and the Canadian government in food processing industries.

Mr. Abu Hassan said after the meeting that a Canadian delegation will visit Jordan soon with the intention of finalising the establishment of industries to produce commodities for Jordan, with surpluses going to other Arab countries.

Talks during the delegation's visit he said will focus on growing Canadian potatoes in Jordan and processing potato chips.

AMPCO operates to tomato paste and crushing plants, canning and wooden packing facilities, as well as a plant to produce metal containers for oil, cheese, etc. It employs up to 800 people in its operations, directly related to agricultural production and marketing, according to Mr. Abu Hassan.

Iraqi delegation, other officials visit Mu'ta University

KARAK (Petra) — President of the Al Baker University for Military Studies in Iraq, Major General Ne'meh Hussein, and the accompanying delegation currently on a visit to Jordan, paid a visit Wednesday to Mu'ta University in Karak, where they were received by the university president, Dr. Ali Mahafzah, the university's vice president for military affairs and senior officials and army officers at the university.

The guests were briefed by the commander of the college of military sciences on the university's development and goals. Major General Hussein also toured the university's various departments.

Royal Jordanian director denies reports of layoffs

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Jordanian has denied reports that it will soon lay off a number of its employees, and said the national airline was keen on maintaining the services of all its productive employees.

The denial was made by Mr. Mahmoud Balqaz, Royal Jordanian director general, during a ceremony held Wednesday to honour 70 employees who had served with the national airline for 15 to 20 years. Royal Jordanian attaches great importance on providing the best of training to its employees who form its backbone and are the national airline's pride, Mr. Balqaz said.

The honouring of the employees is part of the airline's policy to boost the morale of its employees and the training courses offered to them are bound to add more efficiency to their work, Mr. Balqaz noted.

He said that the Royal Jordanian has created a new department to take charge of training and improving the skills and efficiency of the employees with the purpose of attracting

Arab and foreign passengers and achieving its far reaching objectives.

Those honoured by the Royal Jordanian, Mr. Balqaz added, have contributed towards the progress of their country over the past years and they deserved awards for their efforts and their loyalty.

At the same time, Mr. Balqaz announced the following appointments in a number of Royal Jordanian's senior positions. According to the new transfers Mr. Akel Bitaji will become higher vice president for airport services; Mr. Ahmad Kuntar will be vice president for administrative and services affairs; Mr. Ghassan Ali becomes vice president for marketing and sales; and Mr. Mousa Anz will become vice president for training affairs.



Mahmoud Balqaz

Mr. Bitaji used to serve as vice president for sales and marketing; Mr. Kuntar was vice president of airport services (traffic); Mr. Ghassan Ali was the vice president of the Jordanian-Iraqi Air Cargo Company; and Mr. Mousa Anz was vice president for administrative affairs.

Seventy employees received merit awards from Mr. Balqaz during the ceremony.

Tafileh to promote agricultural, industrial, and mining projects

TAFILEH (Petra) — A general meeting was held in Tafileh in southern Jordan Wednesday to review projects to be implemented in Tafileh region during the coming year. The meeting, chaired by Tafileh Acting Governor Rateb Al Majali, was attended by representatives of the public and the private sectors officials from the Ministry of Planning and local heads of departments.

Discussion dealt not only with implementing projects, but also with difficulties and problems that emerged in the course of carrying out earlier projects in the region. Mr. Majali said that a report from the Ministry of Planning reveals that agriculture is the most important activity in the region, followed by industry and mining.

The five-year plan for Tafileh has provisions for spending JD 17 million on industry, JD 13 million on mining, and investments that corresponds to 36 per cent of the total volume of investments in that region, Mr. Majali said at the meeting.

He said that nearly JD 4,734 million will be spent on phosphate and other mining projects during the coming five years.

He said the total number of projects to be set up in Tafileh region this year is expected to be 42, costing JD 15 million, of which JD 3 million will be spent on transport.

Mr. Majali pointed out that plans have been laid for implementing 13 projects, or 31 per cent of the total number of

projects of Tafileh's five-year plan during 1987 at the cost of JD 4,734 million.

During 1987 two projects for promoting telecommunications and postal services will be implemented at the cost of JD 555,000, and a project for supplying electricity to rural regions will cost JD 245,000, Mr. Majali added.

He said that at least JD 1,235 million will be spent this year on water and sewerage projects, JD 7,948 million on promoting phosphates production, JD 698,000 on agricultural schemes, and JD 7.25 million on industry.

He pointed out that a total of JD 85 million will be spent on Tafileh projects between 1986 and 1990.

DLDNA opens week of activities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Libraries, Documentation and National Archives (DLDNA) Wednesday opened a week long cultural activity to highlight national documents and other publications.

DLDNA Director Ahmad Sharkas said that the activities include a seminar on the importance of documents in the history and culture of the country, a cultural awareness campaign, and an exhibition of documents and photographs featuring the history of the Transjordan Emirates.

The activities, Dr. Sharkas said, are designed to highlight the importance of documents in the life and history of Jordan and their role in projecting the country's

cultural identity and image.

The week of activities will be in response to the International Council on Archives call which was endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Dr. Sharkas pointed out. He said that his department this year received valuable documents about prominent families in Jordan who played a role in the development of the country, and hopes to get more photographs and documents from the public for the purpose of displaying them at future exhibitions.

DLDNA was established in 1973 for the purpose of supervising the work of libraries, gathering documents and organising archives of photos.

Mafrag hosts cross country school race

MAFRAQ (Petra) — A cross country race for schools in Mafrag region took part here Wednesday. Students from 64 schools ran for 10 kilometres.

The Khaldiye secondary school came first in the race followed by Mafrag industrial school.

Dr. Ahmad Bashaieh, secretary general of the Ministry of Education which organised the race, distributed cups and awards to the winners.

The event was attended by education officials and guests.

Bethlehem celebrates Christmas under shadow of occupation

(Continued from page 1)

say to all the people of the world: may you all have a merry Christmas, a blessed new year, and a peaceful new year.

Mr. Freil said several thousand pilgrims, most of them from Europe, were expected in the town for the holiday.

In the Grotto of the Nativity under the Church of the Nativity, pilgrims kissed the 16-joint star that marks the traditional site of Jesus' birth.

Many used their Bibles as guidebooks as they walked through the town. Santa Claus' threw candy at children and Christmas carols blared from loudspeakers.

Later on Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir

delivered a Christmas eve message of peace in Bethlehem.

"The government of Israel remains steadfast in its desire and striving for peace in our area," Mr. Shamir said at a reception hosted by Mayor Freil.

"Let us join together in the hope that the year ahead will indeed be for us and all mankind a year of peace," the right-wing Israeli leader said.

In another development, a left-wing Israeli legislator said Wednesday West Bank Jewish settlers serving in a reserve army unit were likely responsible for the killing of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy during an anti-Israeli demonstration two weeks ago.

Legislator Ran Cohen told AP he had written to Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin to say

"a unit of the settlers probably shot and killed the boy."

Mr. Cohen said armed settlers, driving through the West Bank on their way north, opened fire on stone-throwing Palestinians near the village of Sinjil and then drove past the Balata refugee camp about the time Ramadan Mohammad Zaitun was shot and killed.

Mr. Rabin ordered a probe into the shooting death after determining the boy was killed before Israeli troops fired at demonstrators in the Balata camp near Nablus.

According to news reports, a Jewish settler was also linked with the Dec. 4 killing of a Palestinian student at Birzeit University near Ramallah.

Two students were killed during demonstrations that day.

Iran deal was for hostages

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Reagan renewed his support Tuesday for the Senate Intelligence Committee to send him a report after its three weeks of closed-door hearings into the crisis of Mr. Reagan's six-year-old presidency.

Mr. Reagan told a White House audience the committee's report would not be definitive since few witnesses took advantage of their constitutional rights against self-incrimination and refused to testify.

But Mr. Reagan said, "it will be the most complete report available and I call on the committee to release it so the American people can judge for themselves."

Committee spokesman Dave Holden said the panel's staff was trying to finish a report before the new Congress convenes Jan. 6. But he noted that the full

committee would have to vote to send it to the White House and said it is not clear if that can be done before the existing Congress legally goes out of business.

Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, vice-chairman of the panel, termed Mr. Reagan's request, which the president first made last week, "surprising."

"In effect, what he is doing is asking Congress to tell him why he made the decisions he did," Mr. Leahy said. "This is a foreign policy disaster and they're trying to treat it as a public relations problem."

Mr. Leahy said, "I don't know if there's anything the committee found out that the administration isn't aware of, and could make public anytime they want. I'm somewhat mystified by the president's request, because I don't know of any information we have that they don't have in greater detail."

Mubarak meets Masri

(Continued from page 1)

Conference (OIC).

Mr. Masri and Dr. Abdul Meguid will meet again on Thursday to discuss Middle East problems, the Palestinian question and bilateral relations which are rapidly improving, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry statement said.

In Kuwait, Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said in remarks published on Wednesday the OIC summit on Jan. 26 would be the last if it was a failure.

"Any failure means there will be no more Islamic summit conference," Sheikh Sabah told the daily Al Qabas in an interview.

He said Kuwait would spare no effort to help ensure the success of the meeting.

The six-year-long Iran-Iraq war is expected to be a major topic at the conference.

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Day to remember

AS Christianity celebrates on this day the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, we extend to the whole Christian world our greeting and best wishes on this very important day for Christianity. We also remind them that land of peace, where Jesus Christ was born, is still a land torn by strife. The restrictions on basic human rights, the respect for which Jesus Christ taught the Christian world, in the very place where it all started is a sad twist of irony which all Christian mankind should take note. And the land of peace is a symbol of the injustice which has befallen the Palestinians. The world should no longer acquiesce to this continued injustice suffered by the inhabitants of the country which brought, through Jesus Christ, the message of humility, love and liberty to all mankind.

Christmas is a day of joy and a day to remember all the peoples of the earth who are denied justice and the fulfilment of their basic needs. All over the world, there continues untold suffering of all kinds and forms. Alas, the message of love and of charity to others has almost been forgotten. The spirit of Christmas is obscured these days by the multiplicity of world problems and politics. Death and destruction are commonplace in every corner of the earth; the voices of love and humanitarianism is getting fainter and fainter every passing day. It is therefore on this day, Christmas day, that humanity should voice its concern as loudly as possible in order to reassert and reaffirm Christ's message. It is also a day to remember that man does not live by bread alone, but through spiritual nourishment; his needs for liberty, justice and love are as important as his needs for material well-being and security.

May all Christians, in Jordan, the Arab World, and outside our frontiers, have an ever more meaningful and joyous Christmas. May, we all join together in remembering the spirit of the day and Christ's message of brotherly love and justice.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Continued coordination

THE Lower House of Parliament has endorsed the 1987 national budget following detailed discussions by the House Financial Committee and a debate by deputies. Tuesday's session, in which deputies aired their views on different topics included in the budget, once again reflects the continued coordination and cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities in Jordan. The open and candid debate in the house projects the democratic way the government and Parliament handle issues of concern to the nation. In his reply to the deputies, Prime Minister Zaid Rifai reiterated his pride in the high level of coordination and cooperation between his government and the representatives of the Jordanian people. Both sides proved to be in full agreement on boosting the country's defence and strengthening the Armed Forces, public security and civil defence. Both sides seemed in full agreement on means of helping the Arab people in the occupied territories and enhancing their steadfastness in the face of Israel's measures. Prime Minister Rifai warned the deputies against issuing statements that have no truth in them and originate from irresponsible people. He also warned against spreading rumours that are designed to sow dissension and create instability. This country is firm in its pan-Arab and national commitments and will go ahead with its policies regardless of hostile attitudes and enemy plots.

Al Dustour: True image of democracy

TOWARDS the conclusion of Parliament's eight-hour session on the 1987 budget, Prime Minister Zaid Rifai affirmed the government's determination to maintain the momentum of construction and progress achieved in the Kingdom. The debate that followed the announcement of the House Financial Committee's report reflected a true image of democracy and displayed total cooperation and coordination between the government and the legislative body for serving the nation. Prime Minister Rifai was careful to praise such cooperation and pledged that his government will pursue such cooperation because it was the sound and best manner in reaching fruitful results benefitting the nation. The debate manifested the desire on both sides for continuing all efforts for bolstering the country's Armed Forces and security services which provide protection to the citizens, and both sides seemed totally agreed on the need for maintaining assistance for the Arab population under Israeli rule and both endorsed a JD 10 million extra help for financing projects in the occupied Arab land. The new budget is aimed at giving further strength to the industrial, agricultural and social sectors and promoting public services and also provides for handling the issue of unemployment through the implementation of various projects. The brotherly spirit that prevailed during the House debate was an indicator of the fruitful cooperation between the government and parliament which we hope will continue as always in the best interests of the nation.

Sawt Al Shaab: Constructive stride

THE debate in the Lower House of Parliament on Tuesday was marked by democratic spirit and a constructive atmosphere. The legislative and executive authorities have shown total cooperation in matters of interest for the nation. The deputies spoke frankly, airing their views and presenting their remarks, criticising parts of the budget and offering proposals and suggestions. Both authorities found common ground and agreed on all points in the budget, and approved by the House Financial Committee. Both sides agreed on the need of strengthening the Armed Forces and public security and they also decided that more assistance be extended to the Arab people of the occupied territories. They were unanimous in their support for the King's pan-Arab policies and Jordan's national commitments, and they voiced support for the government's five-year plan which will be implemented in both banks. By endorsing the new budget Parliament has thus given the government the go-ahead in implementing projects and offering better services and creating more jobs. This budget is for the first year of the new five-year plan, and contains provisions for numerous projects designed to stimulate the economy and raise the social standard of people.

VIEW FROM AMERICA

With Irangate, Palestinians have been virtually forgotten in U.S.

By Franz Schurmann

SAN FRANCISCO — Looking through Al Ahran of December 8, I saw an astonishing political cartoon. It showed a puzzled Arab looking at three soldiers shooting together at an enemy behind a tree. The caption said "Arafat: Syria, Amal, and Israel against the Palestinians."

Even more depressing was another piece datelined Amman which reported that by the year 2010 Israel plans to have 300 settlements on the West Bank and Gaza with a population of 1,300,000 Israelis. And that during the next 14 years Israel plans to force the emigration of some 300,000 Arabs from the West Bank. The article spoke of an Israeli plan to "empty" the West Bank of its Arab inhabitants.

Not much appears in the American press about the terrible tragedies being experienced by the Palestinian people. There are small items in the press about the fighting in Lebanon. And now reports have appeared about killings by Israeli occupation forces of young Palestinians on the West Bank. The main thing that obsesses the American media now about the Middle East is "Irangate." The Palestinians have been virtually forgotten.

We have seen small articles now and then about the Israeli settlement strategy. Since there is a housing shortage in Israel itself, cheap housing is being built in the environs of major Israeli cities. It resembles the way suburbs have been growing fast in the environs of American cities. Here it is the farmers who lose or sell their land to the new suburbanites. On the West Bank, the new suburbs are being built at the cost of Arab land.

We read that the unemployment rate among young Palestinians is extremely high. The Israelis prefer to employ cheap uneducated

labour from the Gaza Strip. It is similar to the way Americans employ cheap Mexican labour or the South African whites employ cheap black labour. Palestinians, however, are enormously eager for education. They are among the most educated people in the world. It is hard, even for the most brutal of ruling forces to prevent a people from becoming educated. But the Israeli military and police want these educated Palestinians to leave, go somewhere else.

Yet the heroic resistance of Palestinians in Lebanon shows that these people are not going to surrender. It is understandable that the Lebanese Shi'a want the Palestinians to leave. Southern Lebanon is their land, and Palestine is the land of the Palestinians. Some day these battle-hardened Palestinians are going to return to their land.

If Syria, Amal, and Israel are attacking the Palestinians, then who helps them? Certainly not Iran whose main concern is fighting Iraq. Certainly not the U.S. Hardly the Soviet Union which seems to have been losing interest in the PLO. Not China which has been supporting Iran again. Not France which too is moving closer to Iran. The European countries which in the 1970s were mildly sympathetic to the PLO have backed away.

The Palestinians seem to be all alone. Yet in World War II the Jews were abandoned by all and suffered millions of people killed by the Germans. Yet the Jewish people fought back heroically. It is a tragedy that in so doing they had to oppress another suffering people, the Palestinians.

The Palestinians will emerge from this tragedy as a people and as a force. The political circumstances which have turned their Arab brothers against them will change. What will too change is the

sentiments of Americans towards Arabs. Whatever their prejudices, most Americans have a deep hatred of oppression, even if it is by people so influential in America as Jews. And even among Jews themselves there is a growing sense of unease and even shame over the oppressor actions taken by their Israeli brothers. I can see the sentiment changing and, though the changes seem slow, they will have an effect on American actions in the Middle East sooner or later.

The Israelis want a flood of Soviet Jews pouring into Israel. They can then push their settlement policies with vigour, and they can find more and more pretexts to push Palestinians out of Israel. Yet the irony is that so many Soviet Jews have, in fact, ended up in America. I live close to a colony of them. They form a settlement of thousands on one of the ocean beach areas just beyond downtown New York City. There are also colonies of non-Soviet Israelis in the U.S. The Israeli birth rate is down, and their intellectuals and professionals are depressed by the uncertain economic conditions and the changing cultural life.

Sooner or later Israel must come to terms with the Palestinians. Their grandiose ideas of a "Greater Israel" ended in the debris of their invasion of Lebanon. Their ideas of an Israel encompassing all of Palestine are going to end as well. Palestinians will never lose their sacred land. Perhaps in the years to come Palestine will come to consist of a mainly Jewish part along the Mediterranean coast and an essentially Arab part higher up in the hills. Perhaps Jerusalem may become something like a world capital, a city for all of humanity and not just one or two or three peoples.

Syria counts the cost of military build-up

The economy of Syria is collapsing because that country and Israel are technically still at war, so Damascus has a huge military budget. Tony Walker, recently in Syria, concludes that prospects for a revival of its economy are bleak.

SYRIA is still technically at war with its neighbour, Israel, more than 10 years after the last major Arab-Israeli conflagration. The Syrian economy has not budged in that time from a war footing.

This has placed an enormous burden on a country which is now, wilting under the unremitting pressure of a massive diversion of resources to the military sector.

The 1986 budget, which shows a 5 per cent increase in defence spending to Syrian pounds 24,600 million (\$6.3 billion), or 55 per cent of total current expenditure, underlined the fact that, despite Syria's economic malaise, there is no pulling back from President Hafez Al Assad's bid for strategic parity with Israel. Meanwhile, Syria's economy exhibits characteristics of a country at war.

Five-hour power cuts are scheduled each in the major cities, water is shut off at night and there are shortages of basic commodities such as sugar, coffee and rice. Some factories have closed for lack of raw materials, others are operating at only a fraction of capacity.

The government admits to an inflation rate of 23 per cent or 39 per cent, according to which

that stand between Syria and insolvency.

The Saudis, who provide about \$540 million annually, are the only ones honouring the Baghdad Arab League summit agreement of 1978 which established levels of funding for front-line states confronting Israel. Kuwait suspended its payments at the end of 1985 in protest at Syria's support for non-Arab Iran in the Gulf war.

Saudi Arabia is reported to have provided emergency funds of about \$200 million beyond its Baghdad commitment, but there is no lasting relief in sight for Syria.

Syria's armed forces of more than 400,000 and up to seven security branches employing a further 200,000 men account for a huge and essentially non-productive chunk of Syria's workforce out of a population of 11.5 million, half of whom are under 14.

Another burden on the Syrian economy is a highly-centralised administration and impenetrable bureaucracy. This has proved a severe handicap for even the most resourceful Syrian entrepreneurs.

Dr. Mohammed Imadi, a well-regarded U.S.-trained economist who was appointed Minister of Economy last year, has liberalised foreign investment

rules in an attempt to encourage new investment. This has not materialised and capital flight is a serious problem.

"Most people have got very little sympathy for the government's economic policies," said a Western observer. "Everybody you talk to knows they are doing a bad job. Syrians have been capitalists for hundreds of years. They believe they can do better."

Syria is seeking where possible to purchase on credit. There are reports in Damascus that the Syrians recently negotiated a 1.2 million tonne wheat agreement with France on highly preferential terms. Talk in the Syrian capital of possible arms and foodstuffs agreements with the French coincided with an end to the bombing campaign on the streets of Paris.

Syria's cash squeeze has forced a curtailment of construction projects. Cranes stand idle next to half-finished high-rise buildings. Work appears to have come almost to a standstill on a new presidential palace overlooking Damascus.

Only projects which have the highest priority continue, such as an impressive sporting complex at Latakia on the coast in northern Syria which is to be the site of the next Mediterranean games. There

are doubts, however, that it will be finished in time.

Agricultural sector imports are accorded priority. Cash, or goods to barter, is found for fertilisers and insecticides (Syria has a durable insect population).

Syria has been successful in stabilising its foreign exchange market by introducing draconian penalties for black market trading of up to 15 years' jail with no right of appeal. It has also introduced a flexible rate which corresponds more or less with the value of the Syrian pound traded in neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan.

The stringent foreign exchange measures have stopped the black market, but appear not to have increased significantly the flow of hard currency through the banks, which continue to be starved of funds.

The oil price collapse and the slowdown of activity in the Gulf has hit an important source of funds. Workers' remittances through official and unofficial channels are believed to be down, although by how much is unclear.

Western embassies advise their nationals to approach business dealing with Syria with utmost caution, citing as reasons an opaque bureaucracy and uncertainties about payments.

The Hindawi affair in Britain has cast a shadow over Syria, attempts to extract aid from the Western bloc. After the conviction in London of Nazim Hindawi, a Jordanian carrying a Syrian passport, on charges of plotting to blow up an Israeli El Al airliner, Britain indicated that it would veto proposed European Community assistance to Syria. The U.S. terminated all economic assistance to Syria in 1983.

Syria's disbursed outstanding foreign debt, according to World Bank statistics, is about \$2 billion. A growing number of banks have been reporting arrears on debt payments, and Syria's capacity to borrow is extremely limited.

The petroleum sector provides perhaps the one bright spot in the Syrian economy. A new oilfield in eastern Syria has come on stream, reducing Syrian dependence on imported crude to about 70,000 barrels per day from the previous 100,000 b/d.

The consortium of Western companies, led by Pecten of the U.S., which discovered the new oilfield, has identified promising deposits. It is possible that, by the mid-1990s, Syria may be self-sufficient in oil, but in the meantime prospects for revival of the Syrian economy are bleak. Financial Times feature.

4 decades of Casey — the man who 'wheeled and dealed'

By Robert Furlow
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Spymaster, tax lawyer and self-made millionaire, federal stock regulator, political operative and, finally, chief of all United States spies.

Whatever else can be said about CIA director William Casey's past four decades — and friends and foes have pointed comments aplenty — they have been interesting.

Last weekend, Casey lay in Washington's Georgetown University Hospital, slowly recovering from brain surgery to remove a tumor. Hospital

spokeswoman Robin Paves said Saturday that his condition remained stable.

Casey now apparently faces radiation or other extended anti-cancer treatment — a tough assignment for any 73-year-old. However, President Ronald Reagan says he has no plans to replace Casey as CIA director, and associates say they expect him back on the job.

"He's a fighter, he's a tough guy," CIA spokesman Sharon Foster said Friday. "So we've all got our hopes up here."

During World War II, Casey joined the forerunner of the CIA, the Office of Strategic Services, and became chief of OSS secret

intelligence for Europe. He had direct responsibility for penetrating Nazi Germany with secret agents near the end of the war.

"The OSS was exciting, challenging, high-spirited, mysterious," he recalled later.

Casey was a backroom political leader in the 1940s and later, too, as law partner and pal of the late Leonard Hall, Republican Party chairman under the late President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In 1980, he took over as manager of what some thought was a flagging Reagan presidential campaign, winning high praise for helping bring about victory.

People who see him only once or twice tend to comment on his mumbling speech and rather disheveled appearance, but foes have learned not to underestimate his intellect.

Known as a fast learner on various issues, he is a voracious reader with 10,000 volumes on history and biography in his personal library.

But he has had critics, too. Less than six months after he took the helm of the CIA in 1981 he was enmeshed in criticism of his past business dealings and his management of the spy agency.

Three years later he was criticised over the CIA's mining of Nicaraguan harbours.

Then came congressional allegations that he had been involved in the Reagan campaign's acquisition of political material from the Carter White House during the 1980 presidential campaign.

And then it all died down.

So did controversies over his personal finances as well as over CIA secret operations and preparations of a manual counseling Nicaraguan rebels in the "selective use of violence" to "neutralise" civilian officials.

As for his private business dealings, "he has wheeled and dealed his way into a personal fortune, sometimes at the expense of his clients," Democratic senator William Proxmire said as long ago as 1971, when Casey was up for confirmation to head the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Casey was confirmed as SEC chairman by voice vote two days later.

The talk of wheeling and dealing continued for the next 15 years with no apparent effect on Casey's government. He did, however, move to put his substantial stock holdings into a blind trust three years ago.

As the Iran-contras crisis unfolded, Casey testified at length before Congress about the CIA's role in arms shipments to Iran. He conceded that the intelligence agency became involved in the secret dealings with Iran in the summer and fall of 1985, before Reagan issued formal authorisation.

However, Casey told congressional committees he did not learn until October of this year that profits from those shipments may have been diverted to the Nicaraguan contra rebels — and that he did not know for certain until told by Attorney General Edwin Meese III on Nov. 24, a day before the scheme was publicly disclosed.

Casey's testimony prompted some members of Congress to criticise his apparent lack of knowledge about the diversion of

funds, which reportedly began in early 1986.

Born in Elmhurst, New York, on March 13, 1913, Casey graduated from Fordham University and St. John's University law school. Following the war, he worked in Washington with a Senate committee and in Europe as a Marshall plan adviser.

After years of highly successful tax-law work in New York, he returned to the capital, serving at the SEC under President Nixon.

LETTERS

Setting the record straight

To the Editor:

As one of your readers, I am proud of the Jordan Times' good coverage of news, which makes it outstanding amongst its contemporaries. Nevertheless, I felt deeply hurt by what, I am sure, was an unintentional error in your coverage of Tuesday's Parliament session. Without any hard feelings on my part, I immediately ask you to kindly publish the following correction in your Thursday issue as stipulated by the relevant article of the Publication Law. You are free to publish, if you wish, the introductory phrases of my letter:

In your issue No. 3357 of Wednesday, Dec. 24, 1986, you reported very well on your front page the events and debates that took place in Tuesday's parliamentary meeting. Although your coverage is always commendable I must bring to your attention an error in that article that touched upon me. You made the following incorrect statement: "Later, both Mr. Haj Hassan who is also a deputy from Amman, and Mr. Shubeilat, who also represents the capital, apologised to each other and their argument was taken off the minutes of the meeting despite protests by Mr. Shubeilat."

The correct facts are that it was only Minister of Labour and Deputy Haj Hassan who apologised for his offensive statement. I did not apologise at all, as there was nothing that I said to apologise for. I further stated that there was nothing in criticising ministers and that our forum is just made for that sort of thing, provided abusive language is not used.


You correctly reported that I and many colleagues protested against my speech being taken off the minutes, but it seems that my honourable colleagues were so moved by Mr. Haj Hassan's apology that they offered in a gesture of goodwill to take off my speech from their records after they ordered his offensive remarks to be struck off. Many protested against such injustice, but Parliament had to finally honour our colleagues' majority move.

Wishing you always further leading achievements in your generally excellent coverage.

Laith Shubeilat,
Member of Parliament,
Amman.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

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PHILADELPHIA
BALL ROOM
THE STAR OF THE ORIENTAL DANCE
Nadia Jamal
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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One sterling	1.455375	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.376572	Canadian dollars
	1.96759725	West German marks
	2.22502300	Dutch guilders
	1.64756525	Swiss francs
	40.9097	Belgian francs
	5.47004800	French francs
	1363/1366	Italian lire
	161.90/162.00	Japanese yen
	6.8550/3750	Swedish crowns
	7.4700/4900	Norwegian crowns
	7.4300/4500	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	390.75/391.25	U.S. dollars

LONDON STOCK MARKET

LONDON (R) — Equities closed early ahead of the Christmas holiday, with prices showing a firmer bias, although volume was light, dealers said.

Among leaders, ICI was unchanged at 1,084, Glaxo added 2p to 1,845, Lucas 3p to 466 after a brokers circular and Blue Circle 3p to 665. Elsewhere, P and O added 10p to 508 and RTZ 10p to 692 on demand in a thin market, while Pilkington lost 2p to 651.

The FTSE 100 share index ended 4.2 points higher at 1,665.1 while the FT 30 had gained a net 6.5 points to 1,301.2 at the close of trading.

SIC was unchanged at 174, showing no reaction to its small 5.2 million agreed offer for Whitworth Electric. Newcomer British Gas stood unchanged on balance at 65p.

Government bonds ended with gains ranging to 1/2 point at the longer end on the back of firmer sterling but volume was small, dealers said. The pound closed four basis points higher at 69.0.

Cris found some support at the lower levels. B.P. closed 1p softer at 715 after 713 but Shell gained 2p to 980 after 977.

Banks met tight buying interest with Barclays up 2p at 509 while Midland added a net 3p to 582.

YOUR DAILY Horoscope

from the Carroll Righter Institute

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, DEC. 25, 1986

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Joy abounds on this unusually good day for happiness with members of your family, or with others with whom you have congenial relationships.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) Get in touch with as many persons as you can and improve your relationship with them by being kind.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) You can be happy at home with loved ones around you. It will be a memorable day for you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) An outsider can make this holiday a wonderful time for you. Enjoy kin, but see outsiders, also.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to Jul. 21) This can be a day of happiness and optimism. Make sure that you take your mate wherever you go.

LEO (Jul. 22 to Aug. 21) Be thoughtful of your neighbors as well as kin and good friends today. Show affection for all.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Do something that will show appreciation to those who have been most loyal to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You are highly affectionate and expressive today and can please all those you contact.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Show your devotion to your closest friends and cheer them up. A fine thought for your mate brings romance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be sure to extend good wishes to your friends today and spread more cheer and good will.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Show outside allies how much you think of them and please them with a nice gift. See a lot of friends.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) Invite allies into your home and bring more happiness into their lives. Dash out for a visit.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) You can show special thought for the one you love, so be as affectionate as you can.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, DEC. 26, 1986

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day after the holiday to get everything in perfect working order. You are perceptive of the best means to consider a course of action for the future.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) While you want to prolong the festivities today, it is wiser that you get back to the practical side of life.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Get busy putting your house in order after yesterday's hustle and bustle. Be active and happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) You can set up the appointments for recreational activities in the coming week. Study the future now, also.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to Jul. 21) You are busy in the morning clearing up yesterday's clutter. Later you can be out and about for fun.

LEO (Jul. 22 to Aug. 21) Handle any important correspondence and then be concerned with improving conditions at home.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Get your house in better condition and then you can go out and make important calls on others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Get your appearance improved. Set up appointments with good friends. Improve home conditions.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You can get into the private affairs you have neglected. Be with good friends late, and enjoy hobbies.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be sure to get in touch with good friends for whatever your purpose and get their backing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Come to a fine understanding with an official. Have fun with your friends in the evening.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) You can handle new conditions wisely in the morning. A new contact can astutely answer a question.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Use your hunches in handling another individual. After a good business day, look into new personal matters.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BORN TODAY ... he or she will be very much interested in other persons and be most cooperative. Plan to give this one an opportunity to gain great knowledge, since the mentality is very good. Upon reaching adulthood your progeny will get into his/her most suitable profession.

King Fahd expected to confirm Nazer as Saudi oil minister

JEDDAH (R) — King Fahd signalled that Sheikh Hisham Nazer had been promoted to be Saudi Arabia's full-fledged oil minister and analysts said Wednesday a decree formalising the appointment was expected soon.

Reflecting satisfaction at the outcome of the last OPEC meeting in Geneva, King Fahd said Tuesday: "I congratulate the non-acting oil minister (Nazer), the oil minister who is not acting ... he is oil minister."

Government sources said the king, speaking in colloquial Arabic at the opening of an oil refinery, meant what he said. Oil analysts anticipated a royal decree soon.

Sheikh Nazer, 54, was named acting minister in October when Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani was dismissed after 22 years as minister.

Planning minister since 1975, Sheikh Nazer has earned a reputation as a decisive negotiator who blends toughness with charm.

He led the Saudi team at the

recent OPEC meeting in Geneva, where delegates said he defended King Fahd's prestige by pushing through output cuts to help to boost world oil prices.

Saudi Arabia was architect of the OPEC accord announced last Saturday to return to fixed prices and to cut total group output by 7.25 per cent to 15.8 million barrels per day for the first six months of 1987.

Following King Fahd's remarks Tuesday in the east coast port of Jubail, one well-connected industry analyst said: "I am not surprised. The king was quite pleased by how things went at the OPEC conference."

Diplomatic sources said the king's apparent decision to appoint Sheikh Nazer as full minister was in line with Saudi tradition.

"They (the Saudis) do not like continuous changes and it is hard to see them replacing Sheikh Nazer with another face," one source said.

Some industry analysts had thought the prestigious oil

portfolio might go to a member of the royal family. The names of Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal and Prince Bandar Ibn Sultan, ambassador to Washington, were mooted.

But diplomatic sources said that, while the royal family guarded the sensitive security and political portfolios for itself, it had shown readiness for commoners to retain economic posts, partly to please the kingdom's growing middle class.

The analysts said Sheikh Nazer, responsible for economic plans covering a 20-year period to 1990, was likely to seek improved efficiency at the oil ministry and the state oil organisation, Petromin.

King Fahd dismissed Petromin governor, Sheikh Abdul Hadi Taher last week but did not immediately name a permanent successor.

The analysts said they did not expect any quick initiatives from Sheikh Nazer, a good listener able to act decisively at the right moment.

France set for strikebound Christmas

PARIS (R) — France looked set for a strike plagued Christmas as industrial action on railways, the Paris subway and in ports continued Wednesday affecting mail deliveries and shop sales.

Railway booking clerks are demanding bonus payments for operating computers, pay talks between underground train drivers and management have broken off and seamen are striking against plans to restructure the French merchant fleet.

The wave of protests, coming after similar actions by Air Inter pilots last week and by students earlier this month, marked the first major labour test for Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's government.

Unions at the state-owned gas and electricity utilities Wednesday threatened to strike on Jan. 5 if the government refused to open negotiations on wages.

Stranded or would-be train travellers were looking for

alternative ways to reach their families.

More than 200 extra flights were scheduled from Paris Wednesday and Thursday by the national Air Inter airline to help the estimated 1.2 million Parisians.

Private coach companies set up national services and the transport ministry told regional officials to charter buses.

A traditionally heavy flow of Christmas mail was piling up at railway stations and Paris' department stores complained about flagging sales because of lack of public transport and the absence of visitors from the provinces.

An official at the Printemps store, already commercially hit by a spate of bomb attacks in Paris in September, reported a 30 per cent drop in sales from the same period last year.

Only a skeleton service was operating on the national railway network and stoppages by

administrative staff were reported in many regions.

"We can resume negotiations at any moment," French railways (SNCF) chairman, Mr. Philippe Essig, said in a radio interview.

But Mr. Louis Vannet, leader of the communist-led CGT union, said management came empty-handed at previous talks which broke down Tuesday.

Social Affairs Minister Philippe Seguin said Tuesday night: "Neither the government nor the SNCF management want to score a victory in this conflict."

But budget Minister Alain Juppé pledged the right-wing cabinet would not jeopardise its economic austerity policies by allowing strike wage increases.

"Wages running out of control would mean more inflation and more unemployment."

In Madrid, a Spanish national railway spokesman said hundreds of passengers were stranded at the Franco-Spanish border because of the seven-day French strike.

UAL to buy Hilton hotels

NEW YORK (R) — Transworld Corp. said Tuesday it would sell its Hilton International hotel chain for \$980 million to UAL, parent company of United Airlines, after it said the board of the Dutch state airline KLM backed out of a purchase agreement.

Transworld announced last Thursday that it was selling Hilton International for \$975 million and later said the tentative buyer was KLM.

The KLM bid for the 90-hotel chain had taken analysts by surprise. They said KLM had not given any signs it was interested in widening the scope of its business and was already committed to financing a new fleet of planes. Under the agreement UAL will pay \$632.5 million in cash, 2,546,102 shares of UAL common stock and 10-year bonds with a face value of \$200 million.

Iraq announces large find of phosphate deposits

BAGHDAD (AP) — Phosphate deposits of an estimated 3.5 billion tonnes have been discovered in Iraq, Industry and Mines Minister Subhi Yassin announced Tuesday.

The deposits will make Iraq one of the world's major phosphate producers, he said.

He added that the phosphate rocks were of the same kind now used by the Iraqi fertiliser industry and enough to keep it running for 700 years at present production levels.

He said Iraq's current fertiliser production capacity is one million tonnes annually.

Iraq, a major crude oil producer, is also rich in sulphur and other mineral deposits.

Lebanese lira slides further

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese pound slid further against the dollar Wednesday amid inflated demand for the American currency before the Christmas holiday, dealers said.

"There is a frenzied demand for the dollar. People want to have dollars before Christmas," said one dealer.

The pound closed down two pounds at 72.50/73.00 to the dollar compared with Tuesday's close of 70.50/70.95.

The Lebanese currency has lost more than 72 per cent of its international value this year.

Poor states repay banks \$7b in first half of 1986

WASHINGTON (AP) — Debtor countries slowly are paying back loans to banks in the United States and other more prosperous areas, according to figures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Developing countries ... repaid \$7.1 billion net to international banks during the first half of 1986, in contrast to their \$2.3 billion in net borrowings in the same period a year earlier," the IMF Bureau of Statistics reported.

Their net additional borrowings amounted to \$9 billion in 1985, \$15 billion in 1984 and \$35 billion in 1983.

The report said 15 heavily indebted countries, targeted by U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker for additional lending, repaid a net \$3.4 billion instead during the first six months of this year. The 15 include the biggest debtors, such as Brazil, Argentina and Nigeria.

Figures are published in the latest issue of the fund's IMF Survey, dated Dec. 15.

Paying back debt may seem like a sign of prosperity, but it is actually the opposite, said Mr. Robert Solomon, former director of international finance at the U.S. Federal Reserve Board.

"Developing countries should not reduce their total debt, any more than big corporations do," he said. "They pay off individual debts, but then they borrow more."

The purpose of the additional borrowing is to produce more

goods, create new jobs and raise the standard of living by exploiting natural resources and building new factories. When money flows back to the more developed countries, the poorer ones have less available for their own development.

"It's a sign that something's wrong," said Mr. Solomon, now a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution. "We need something to supplement the Baker plan. That's why we're getting proposals like the Bardley plan to forgive some debts."

Mr. Baker last year asked for \$29 billion in new lending to the 15 debtor, \$20 billion of it from the banks. In return, the debtor countries would adopt policies friendlier to private enterprise, under programmes worked out with the World Bank. A beginning was made by the \$12 billion lending package for Mexico, approved this fall.

There was some new lending to debtor countries by the banks during the first six months of 1986, but the net repayment figure takes that into account. The repayments were larger than the new lending.

Much of the new lending was what the IMF report called "concocted" loans. The banks make them only under pressure

from the IMF and the governments that own it.

"Concocted" lending in the first half of 1986 amounted to \$1.3 billion, the report said: \$1.2 billion to Argentina, \$200 million to Chile and \$200 million to the Philippines.

The impact of these movements on the total debt is small. Poor countries owe well over a trillion dollars, so the net repayment in the first half of 1986 is relatively small.

But the outflow from the poor countries was in addition to the much heavier payments of interest they make on the money they still owe. The World Bank estimated that at \$58.5 billion for 1985.

Another drain on poor countries' funds is that many prosperous people continue to take their money to safe havens in the United States and elsewhere in what is called "capital flight."

"Repayments of international bank loans in the first half (of 1986) were accompanied by a large decline in bank deposits of developing countries — in the amount of \$17.8 billion," the IMF report went on. "The large withdrawal was in contrast to deposits of \$10.2 billion the first half of 1985."

The combination of repayments to banks and the decline of deposits indicates that poor countries are tapping their reserves to keep up with interest payments, said Mr. William Cline, a senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics.

Japan offers world's developing countries \$9.5b Christmas gift

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japan is marking Christmas with a \$9.5 billion gift of economic assistance to the poor of the world, aimed at changing its common international reputation as a tight-fisted, unfeeling scrooge.

On Wednesday, Christmas Eve, the Finance Ministry announced agreement on two major lending programmes to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and is expected to announce another big loan to the bank on Friday, Boxing Day.

The deputy head of the International Finance Bureau, Mr. Fumiya Iwasaki, told reporters the money would be used to sustain the economies of developing nations and fund their industrial and farm projects. It is part of Japan's effort to recycle tens of billions of dollars locked up in its huge trade surpluses.

The United States, Europe and developing nations have all criticised Tokyo for not channelling the surplus where it is most needed, or for using overseas aid and foreign lending as a bridgehead into new markets for Japanese industry.

Japan forecasts it will have an unprecedented \$94 billion trade surplus in the fiscal year ending on March 31, much more than ever piled up by any oil exporting country during the last traffic jam of world capital in the 1970s.

Of the new money, about \$3.6 billion goes to the IMF to help developing nations run their macroeconomic policies.

Another \$2.6 billion is Japan's new contribution to the International Development Association (IDA), the arm of the World Bank that lends money with no strings attached.

Japan had already agreed a \$1.3 billion allocation to the Asian Development Bank's loan fund.

Finance ministry sources said around \$2 billion have also been earmarked for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the low-interest fund of the World Bank. Details are not yet public.

The money will be distributed over a period of several years. None will be in tied loans, meaning that the borrower need not buy Japanese when using the money.

The government hopes these initiatives will persuade Japan's private banking sector, which holds the bulk of the trade profits, to drop their current fears over lending new money to the most indebted nations, such as Mexico.

The finance ministry said that at end-September, Japan's commercial banks had \$24 billion in loans outstanding to the 36 countries it designates as debtor nations.

The government itself is split

over raising the total of annual development aid next fiscal year.

The finance ministry, concerned about balancing a very tight budget, wants to keep any rise to four per cent.

The foreign ministry, more attentive to Japan's overseas image, wants a 7.8 per cent rise to about 670 billion yen (\$4.2 billion).

Council recommends reform in tariff rate policy

Meanwhile, the Japanese tariff council on Wednesday recommended adoption of a plan to expand preferential tariffs and ease import duties on some products from developing countries, a foreign ministry official said.

The plan was presented to Japanese Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, who will submit the bill to the Diet for debate in February, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The plan would give certain industrial products a zero preferential tariff rate and raise by an average of 30 per cent import ceilings under the generalised system of preferences (GSP), the official said.

GSP is used by industrialised nations to reduce tariff rates for imports from developing countries.

Peanuts



Mutt 'n' Jeff

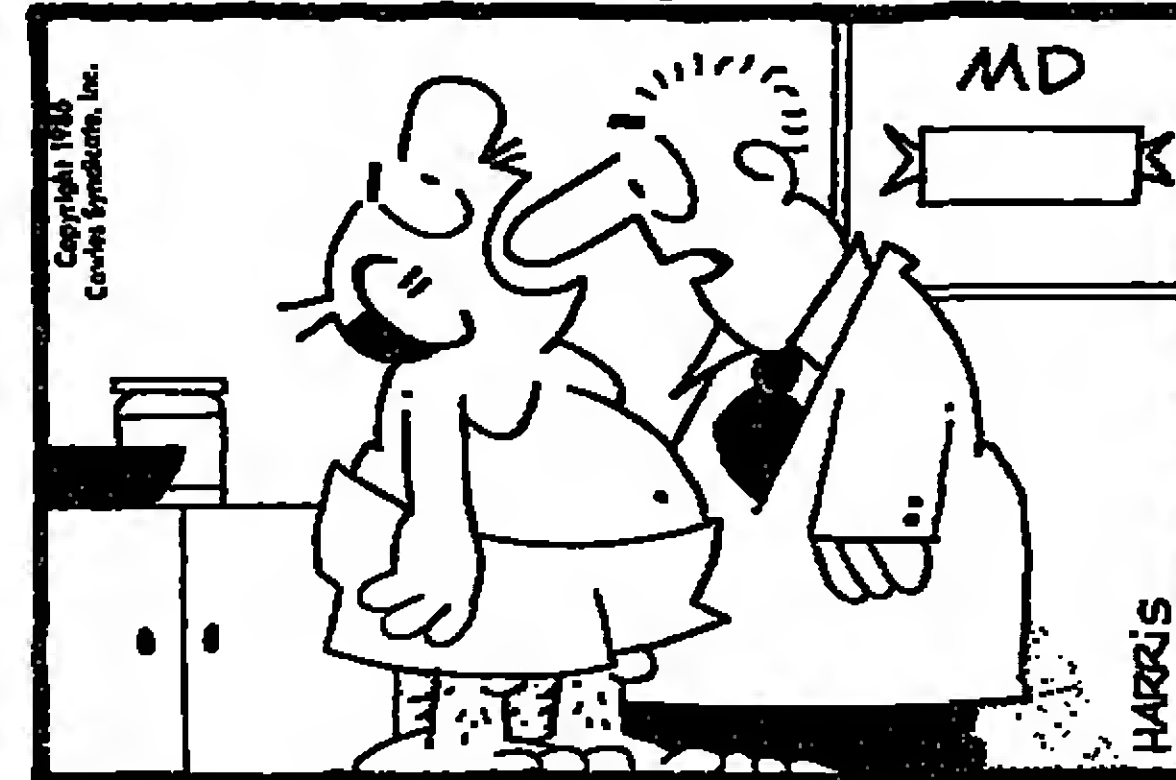


Andy Capp



THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GNUST

SHYKU

BUNNIO

YANTID

Print answer here: A

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AORTA EXERT COLUMN THRASH

Answer: A word used to describe the longest possible speech—"UTTERMOST"

8 black miners killed in S. African tribal violence

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Eight black mineworkers have been killed in a new outbreak of tribal fighting at a South African gold mine, the owners said Wednesday.

Anglo American Corporation said 37 miners were injured in the clashes which broke out Tuesday night at a hostel for migrant workers at President Steyn Mine in the Orange Free State.

Police were called to help mine security staff halt the fighting between Basotho tribesmen from Lesotho and Shoshas from the predominantly independent homelands of Transkei and Ciskei.

Tension has been running high at the mine since a team leader was killed in a small two weeks ago tribal clashes claimed 18 lives there last week.

The latest clash brings to 44 of the 200 migrant miners killed in tribal fighting at three South African mines in the past month.

An Anglo American statement said 16 of the injured were being treated in hospital. One was in a critical condition and seven were described as seriously ill.

Most of the remaining miners at the hostel had been sent home early for Christmas, it said.

Mine management was organising a meeting between representatives of the two factions to try to establish the cause of the fighting and reach a settlement, Anglo American said.

The last month has seen a spate of violent clashes on South Africa's turbulent mines.

Thirty-three miners have been killed in periodic battles over the

past month at Anglo American's Vaal Reef Gold Mine and five died at gold fields of South Africa's Kloof Mine.

Industry experts say only a small spark is needed to ignite underlying tensions between hostile factions on the mines, where migrant workers live in single-sex hostels.

Miners have become increasingly politicised and this has fuelled tensions between workers, they say.

The mining industry, critical to South Africa's economy, has also been hit by a series of accidents and strikes.

In the worst gold mining disaster in South African history, 177 miners were killed at Kroms gold mine in September by toxic fumes from a fire deep underground. The accident led to claims by the black National Union of Mineworkers of slack safety standards.

S. Korean opposition proposes compromise

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The president of South Korea's major opposition party said Wednesday he would consider the ruling party's proposal for changing the country's form of government if democratic reforms were included.

Mr. Lee Min-Woo told reporters the government and ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP) would have to agree to free elections, amnesty for all political prisoners and guarantees of certain civil rights, including freedom of the press and the right to assemble.

In earlier discussion on proposed changes to the country's constitution, the ruling party demanded a parliamentary cabinet system with a powerful prime minister and a figurehead president.

Mr. Lee's New Korea Democratic Party (NKDP) wanted a strong president, directly elected. The opposition party has contended that both the ruling party's proposal and the current Electoral College system for choosing the president favour the party in power.

Mr. Lee urged the government of President Chun Doo-Hwan to present proposals for democratic reforms.

This is the first indication of compromise by either side on proposed constitutional changes.

Commander says Moscow must counter 'Star Wars'

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union must take steps to counter the U.S. "Star Wars" project in order to ensure the invulnerability of its nuclear weapons, the commander of the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces said Wednesday.

Yuri Maksimov told the weekly Moscow News that the project, formally known as the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), could compromise offensive space weapons capable of destroying Soviet intercontinental missiles within minutes.

"In effect, this will be a new component of U.S. strategic offensive, forward-based arms, deployed in outer space over the Soviet Union's territory," Deputy Defence Minister Maksimov said.

Discussing the Soviet freeze on nuclear weapons tests, he said: "There is no denying that our unilateral moratorium makes it rather difficult to perfect armaments, but we have to accept this for the sake of the common goal — ending the arms race and preserving peace on earth."

His remarks were apparently made before the Soviet announcement last week that the test freeze would end after the first U.S. detonation next year.

"The United States needs nuclear tests to create fundamentally new, destructive arms as well as nuclear-pumped laser weapons," Maksimov said.

Asked if SDI would increase the vulnerability of Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), he said: "Yes, it will increase if we do not take counter-measures."

Echoing the confidence of senior Soviet scientists that Moscow would be able to find an effective answer to SDI, he said: "Our reply to the 'Star Wars' programme can be incomparably simpler and cheaper."

Giving examples of possible responses, he said the Soviet Union could combine deployment of ICBMs with dummy missiles or launch ICBMs with a wide range of trajectories.

Such measures would cause the space-based anti-missile system envisaged under SDI to squander its energy resources and lose its firepower, Maksimov said.

Deployment of extra Soviet ICBMs and the use of more warheads per missile, would cause a drastic decline in the ability of an anti-missile system to intercept attacking weapons, he added.

Soviet scientists have also talked of deploying space mines, land-based high-capacity lasers and clouds of "space shrapnel" which could penetrate a defensive steel screen around an anti-missile station in space.

Maksimov charged the United States is seeking the power to inflict a devastating first nuclear strike on the Soviet Union, but added: "In existing conditions of strategic parity, a crippling strike is impossible."

He said it was an illusion to think that SDI could create a failsafe anti-missile defence. "On the other hand, we have no doubts as to SDI's offensive capacities," he added.

COLUMNS 7&8

Teenage marriage law amended

BAGHDAD (AP) — Parliament amended Iraq's personal status law to lower the legal age for marriage for men and women from 16 to 15. The 250-member assembly preferred the amendment over a draft bill proposed by the Justice Ministry to amend the criminal law to enable people under 16 to marry as a way of escaping punishment in cases of rape and other sexual violations.

Under the current law judicial authorities drop prosecution from victim acceptances an offer of marriage by the assailant as a settlement. Members of parliament argued that the draft bill would encourage the sort of crime it sought to reduce.

S. Korea frees 952 prisoners

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Seven dissidents were among the 952 prisoners freed in special Christmas parole Wednesday, the Justice Ministry announced. Officials said those granted parole had repented their past and showed exemplary conduct in prison. The unidentified dissidents included six students convicted in playing major roles in anti-government campus demonstrations. The seventh dissident was listed as a non-student.

Thieves snatch hospital's Christmas dinners

BOURNEMOUTH, England (AP) — Thieves made off with a hospital's special Christmas dinner for 250 patients. Police suspect that a small truck was used to cart off the 25 kilograms of turkey, 25 kilograms of chipolatas and 13 kilograms of sausage from Boscombe Hospital in the southern seaside resort of Bournemouth. Chipolatas are small sausages. "It's a despicable theft," said the hospital's Assistant General Manager, Richard Dodd. "We are trying to get a replacement order in so the patients don't suffer."

Last Chevette rolls off assembly line

ATLANTA, Georgia (AP) — The last Chevette, a once-popular sub-compact car built by General Motors Corp. as an answer to escalating oil prices in the mid-1970s, rolled off the assembly line. The Chevette was rushed into production in 1975 because of the Arab oil embargo that sharply pushed up gasoline prices. The car became the No. 1 seller in North America in 1980 and 1981, with 375,396 and 376,758 units were sold, said GM spokesman Ed Lechtzin. In all, more than 2.5 million have been sold.

More jewellery found in sunken ship

KEY WEST, Florida (AP) — A gold rosary studded with emeralds and a brooch with a large rectangular emerald are the latest finds from a sunken Spanish galleon that has yielded millions of dollars worth of treasure. Mel Fisher, who searched for the Nuestra Señora de Atocha for 16 years before finding the mother lode 64 kilometres off Key West in July 1985, described the latest discoveries as "a really fabulous find, really magnificent." If fully extended, the rosary's gold chain would be just under 1.5 metres long. Seven emeralds are on the cross, and two teardrop emeralds are suspended from the cross arms. Divers believe another hung from the base of the cross, but it was not found. The brooch is studded with a rectangular emerald estimated at 15 to 20 carats. Fisher said the emerald on the brooch was "the biggest pure emerald I've ever seen."

Voyager crew gets heroes' welcome

EL PASO AIR FORCE BASE (R) — The crew of the Voyager space shuttle received a heroes' welcome as they landed Tuesday night at the base after a 56-day mission.

The crew, consisting of Commander Francis (Dick) Scobee and Mission Specialist Ellison (Jack) S. Smith, were greeted by a large crowd of family, friends and officials.

Scobee and Smith were the first crew to land at the base since the shuttle's first flight in 1976.

The shuttle, launched on October 3, 1980, completed its 28th mission, STS-51-L, and landed safely after a 56-day mission.

The shuttle carried a variety of scientific and technological experiments, including the first in-flight test of a new type of solar panel.

The shuttle's mission was a success, and the crew was praised for their skill and dedication.

record said Voyager covered a straight-line distance of 37,518 kilometres in nine days, three minutes and 44 seconds.

Voyager's average speed of nearly 174 kilometres an hour was just slightly faster than Charles Lindbergh flew in the first solo transatlantic flight in "Spirit of St. Louis" in 1927.

Among the millions watching television coverage of the soft touchdown was President Reagan, who called it "magnificent."

He said he would award the Presidential Citizen's Medal to Scobee, Smith and Voyager designer Burt Rutan, the pilot's brother, on Monday in Los Angeles.

Asked if they felt like heroes, Rutan looked at Yeager and said: "I don't know what a hero is...and I'm sorry I feel uncomfortable about that."

Yeager added: "It was just something we had to do."

Rutan, a retired air force lieutenant-colonel who flew 325 combat missions in Vietnam and is now a test pilot, paid tribute to Lindbergh and other aviation pioneers, saying they were true heroes because they flew without the electronic instruments, satellite weather forecasts and other technological advances that went into this week's successful flight.

"Some of the early flyers were really hanging it out, for sure," he said.

European rights complaints registered

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Commission has registered 1,000 complaints about human rights violations in 1980, a 10 per cent increase on 1979.

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on Human Rights.

The source, who asked not to be named, said that with 788 cases brought against it, the British government was the most frequently cited defendant.

West Germany was second with 545 complaints, followed by France with 270, Italy with 200, Sweden with 180 and Belgium with 170.

The human rights charter was signed by the 21 Council of Europe member nations. Although all signatories have pledged to abide by it, only 18 allow their subjects to bring legal action under the Treaty in

Strasbourg, Turkey, Cyprus and Malta do not recognise the right of individual appeal.

The commission screens human rights complaints for the European Court of Human Rights and renders initial findings.

Most complaints traditionally come from Britain, the only West European country which has not incorporated the rights charter into its national law and does not have an equivalent constitutional bill of rights.

Hence, Strasbourg is for the British court of first, not last, resort.

Mr. Lee is from Kim Young-Sam's faction, which recently recommended that Kim be made party president to present a more effective anti-government front.

But some dissident factions have objected to proposals for a party shakeup.

Kim Young-Sam's faction has said the opposition party would need strong leadership in 1987, when the ruling party is expected to push for its own form of parliamentary system by taking advantage of factional disputes within the opposition.

White youth attacked in fresh New York violence

NEW YORK (AP) — Racial violence has flared again in a New York neighbourhood as a group of blacks beat a white youth in retaliation for a weekend attack that left a black man dead.

Meanwhile, in response to the weekend attack, a coalition of black organisations accused New York Governor Mario Cuomo and New York City Mayor Edward Koch of "gross negligence in providing equal protection to the black community in abating the racist climate of New York and (turning) back the tide of genocide against black people."

Three whites were arraigned earlier Tuesday on murder charges in the weekend attack on three blacks in the white neighbourhood of Howard Beach.

One of the victims, Michael Griffith, was struck and killed by a car as he fled from attackers.

On Tuesday afternoon, Jeffrey McCarthy, 17, was waiting for a bus in a mostly black neighbourhood when "a group of male blacks approached the victim chanting, 'Howard Beach, Howard Beach,'" said police officer Joseph McConville.

One of the attackers hit McCarthy in the face, then the entire group began punching him, McConville said.

The gang, hurling objects, chased McCarthy across the street, knocked him to the ground and kicked him in the face, head and body. The gang fled when other whites came to help McCarthy, McConville said.

Troops rushed to hill tracts after Bangladesh massacre

COCHABAMBA (AP) — Reinforcements have been rushed to a southern Bangladesh town where Shanti Bahini guerrillas, tribal fighters, are reported to have killed at least 150 people and seized about 150 shops and houses during a three-day rampage.

The Shanti Bahini, the hill and forest dwellers, are reported to have killed at least 150 people and seized about 150 shops and houses during a three-day rampage.

injured, told reporters Wednesday at Ramgarh in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"Distress cries rent the air and we all ran pell-mell for cover. Thank God, the lights suddenly went off and the hall was plunged into pitch darkness. The death figure would have been much higher had it not happened."

Police said the guerrillas fled over the border into neighbouring

Tripura state in India.

All the victims were Muslims resettled in the 14,200 square kilometre stretch of hill and jungle bordering India and Burma and traditionally inhabited by 13 tribes. Sixteen of the wounded are critically ill, doctors said.

The guerrillas last week killed 18 people and abducted 16 others in the area.

The Shanti Bahini took arms a decade ago to press their demand

for self-rule of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

They want the expulsion of 3,000 Muslims resettled there under a government plan to ease overcrowding in the plains, saying this threatened tribal culture and the economy.

More than 2,000 guerrillas surrendered after President Hossain Mohammad Ershad announced an amnesty last year but many are still active.

Argentines protest over bill barring military trials

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Police clashed with protesters minutes after the Argentine congress passed a bill barring new trials of military officers for human rights abuses during the past military regime.

Demonstrators smashed shop windows, vandalised parked cars and set up barricades along an avenue near the congress building.

At least three policemen were injured though there were no immediate reports of arrests, a police spokesman said.

The Chamber of Deputies passed the bill by a wide margin after eight hours of debate, giving final congressional approval to the measure.

The bill now awaits the signature of President Raul Alfonsín, who proposed it in a

speech earlier this month.

Earlier, demonstrators punched and shouted insults at deputy Cesar Jaroslavsky, a close confidante of Mr. Alfonsín and a key backer of the bill, as he left congress during the debate.

The law, which passed the senate on Monday, "extinguishes" legal action against virtually all military and police officers for atrocities during eight years of military rule.

It would not apply to officers who have already testified in their own cases or been convicted.

Argentina's military regime, one of Latin America's most repressive, ended in 1983 after Mr. Alfonsín won elections on a promise to bring military leaders to trial for rights abuses.

Casey not recovered enough to start treatment for cancer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Casey hasn't recovered from last Thursday's brain surgery enough to begin treatment for cancer, officials at Georgetown University Hospital say.

In a condition update on Mr. Casey, 73, who had the cancerous tumour removed last week, the hospital released a statement on Tuesday saying he remains in stable condition as he continues to recover.

"Therapy will commence when recovery from surgery permits," the statement said.

It also included slightly more detailed information on the lymphoma doctors said they found when they removed Mr. Casey's malignant tumour in a 5½-hour

operation last Thursday.

Hospital spokesmen said no date has been determined for starting treatment.

Doctors not connected with Mr. Casey's case have said it has been clear since last Thursday that the tumour was cancerous and that it was unlikely all the cancer had been removed.

Judging from the new description, Dr. Stuart Grossman, a cancer specialist with Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, said on Tuesday, "it's cancer, it's malignant, and unfortunately it does not have a good long-term prognosis."

Dr. Grossman said most patients with illnesses such as Mr. Casey's begin treatment within a week or two of their surgery.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Edited by Herb Extension

THE DICKENS IT IS!
By Jeanne Wilson

ACROSS

- Towel dbe
- Beggar's
- apinch
- Christmas
- Exchange
- Insertion mark
- Star
- Exile tale
- Firenze's
- and on one
- the term
- neighbour
- Wanderer's
- temple
- Rendezvous
- with Hardy?
- Hopscotch
- Seams
- Exposure
- Tendency

DOWN

- Selassie
- Foreign vetch
- "Superman"
- Christmas
- Musical
- Bill leader
- Winged
- Not any to a
- Carpenter's
- Orline
- graphically
- Black
- de deux
- April's land
- House-hunter
- Non
- Groups seen
- in casters

ACROSS

- Beard
- The — (TV)
- Queen
- News, or Srs.
- Three periods
- abdr.
- Macmillan's
- Ben Adhem
- Lines to
- Short jackets
- Guinness
- the actor
- Legs
- Live oak
- Copier
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- Speechifier
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- name to
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- Rough Shake
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DOWN

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- Location
- Chin, phras
- topical tuber
- Of a wedding
- 68 Tropical parrot
- Robert Wyle
- JFK successor
- Mike start
- Card game
- Card game
- Eye parts
- Flam-tinger
- bird
- "I say, not..."
- Humorist
- 100 Toodle-oo
- Joining with
- mat
- Accopt
- 87 Pound for one
- Soviet news agency

Diagramless
17 X 17, by Roger Coburn

ACROSS

- River to the
- Mountain
- Insert
- Kind of racket
- Bowling
- Practitioner
- monogram
- Mountain
- graph
- Antoniating
- "Informal" poet

DOWN

- Antonia
- Solar disk
- Small — (the suspicious)
- Used the bus
- Doone
- Roof overhang
- "These — the times..."
- Orlin
- Adoles
- 11 A Cooperfield

ACROSS

- Excavation
- Mountain
- Waves Sp.
- Wash
- Bring out
- Patience
- Coup d'—
- Finished
- Trig function
- Desire

DOWN

- Single time
- Prolonged
- sound
- 69 Rabbid
- 40 Meadow
- 41 Famous Hun
- Mastery of
- films
- Crashed
- 50 Of the back-bone

ACROSS

- 42 Med. sch.
- 30 Med. store
- Memorable
- period
- Salor
- 33 Hall
- Report for
- conversations
- 36 Sacramental
- cup
- 42 Ben
- 44 — about
- (approximately)

DOWN

- 45 Appellation
- 46 Mountain
- 47 Bangor's cists
- 48 Rabbid
- 49 Car damage
- 50 Prindig
- 51 Dreck
- 52 Blowing (person)
- 53 Lotion to
- 54 Uppercut
- 55 Paddy plant
- 57 Ocs' org.

ACROSS

- 100 Toodle-oo
- Joining with
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- 87 Pound for one
- Soviet news agency

DOWN

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